“The Band of Brothers”

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Abstract:	In the run up to the Second World War, the War Office agreed to organise territorial units which recruited specifically on the grounds of English Welsh dual identities. These formations, which comprised the 99th London Welsh Heavy Anti-Aircraft regiment and the 46th Liverpool Welsh Royal Tank Regiment, began recruiting in 1939 from English cities with significant Welsh populations. This article explores the mobilisation and performance of English Welsh identities during the Second World War and reflects upon why, at a time of global conflict, some English men opted to enlist on the basis of Welsh antecedents. Relatively little attention has been paid to the plurality of British identity in wartime or to how the existence of “hybrid ‘dual identities’” within the constituent countries of the United Kingdom informed the functioning of Britishness during the Second World War. Making use of previously unpublished and original life writing sources, this article illuminates the significance of dual identifications across two nations at once - in this case, Wales and England - within the multinational state of Britain at war. Overall, it points to how a sense of dual identifications could feed into recruitment patterns and potentially bolster combat motivation and morale by examining the intersectionality between subjective wartime constructions of kin, home, and nation(s).

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"THE BAND OF BROTHERS": THE MOBILIZATION OF ENGLISH WELSH DUAL IDENTITIES IN SECOND WORLD WAR BRITAIN

The Second World War has been defined by Paul Addison as the "culminating moment" in the history of multinational Britain, a state which since the eighteenth century "had drawn the English, the Scots, and Welsh into an ever closer union."[1] In his view, the wartime period constitutes the "high-water mark of Britishness": a time when a sense of common purpose bound together the constituent countries of the United Kingdom and heightened a British consciousness.[2] Yet relatively little attention has been paid to the plurality of British identity in wartime or to how the existence of "hybrid 'dual identities'" within the constituent

[1] Paul Addison, "The Impact of the Second World War," in *A Companion to Contemporary Britain, 1939-2000*, ed. Paul Addison and Harriet Jones (Oxford, 2005), 3-22, at 12. See also Sonya O Rose, *Which People's War? National Identity and Citizenship in Wartime Britain 1939-1945* (Oxford, 2003); Wendy Ugolini and Juliette Pattinson, "Negotiating Identities in Multinational Britain during the Second World War," in *Fighting for Britain? Negotiating Identities in Britain During the Second World War*, ed. Wendy Ugolini and Juliette Pattinson (Oxford, 2015), 1-24.

[2] Paul Addison, "National Identity and the Battle of Britain," in *War and the Cultural Construction of Identities in Britain*, ed. Barbara Korte and Ralf Schneider (Amsterdam, 2002), 225-40, at 235.

countries informed the functioning of Britishness during the Second World War.[3] This article illuminates the existence of dual identifications amongst the descendants of Welsh migrants in England and, in particular, focuses on a cohort of male English volunteers for whom Wales and Welshness held *meaning* at the point of their military enlistment. In the run up to the war, the War Office agreed to organize two territorial units, the 99th London Welsh Heavy Anti-Aircraft regiment and the 46th Liverpool Welsh Royal Tank Regiment, which recruited from English cities with significant diasporic Welsh populations. Making use of previously unpublished and original life writing sources, this article explores the mobilisation and performance of English Welsh identities during the Second World War for the first time. It reflects upon why, at a time of global conflict, some English men opted to enlist on the basis of Welsh antecedents and illuminates the significance of dual identifications across two nations *at once* – in this case, Wales and England – within the multinational state of Britain at war.

Anthony King emphasizes how twentieth-century armies "sought to unite their troops around common forms of social identity and civic obligation."[4] The Second World War provided a moment of galvanization for diasporic Welsh patriotism in Liverpool and London which, in turn, led to English men volunteering to serve in "hybrid" regiments which illuminated the salience of dual English Welsh inheritances. In a time of war, the idea of Welsh identity potentially "trumped other factors" in determining how some of these English

[3] Thomas Hajkowski, *The BBC and National Identity in Britain, 1922-53* (Manchester, 2010), 2.

[4] Anthony King, *The Combat Soldier. Infantry Tactics and Cohesion in the Twentieth and Twenty-first Centuries* (Oxford, 2013), 62.

volunteers saw themselves.[5] This article examines the emergence of military units which coalesced around the idea of English Welsh dual identity before providing two narrative case studies from London and Liverpool to underline the significance of dual identities and subjectivities during the Second World War. Overall, it points to how a sense of dual identifications could feed into recruitment patterns and potentially bolster combat motivation and morale by examining the intersectionality between wartime constructions of kin, home, and nation(s).

SECOND GENERATION IDENTITIES AND IDENTIFICATIONS

Keith Robbins's work underscores the centrality of mobility within constructions of modern British identity, highlighting how, since the nineteenth century, the borders within Britain have "existed to be crossed – in both directions."[6] Hazel Easthope concurs that, in this period, there was a shift from "relatively stable identities rooted in place to hybrid identities characterized by mobility and flux."[7] By the twentieth century, as Paul Ward points out, Britishness was an identity accepted, put together and lived by the majority of the people within the United Kingdom.[8] Krishan Kumar identifies the fundamental importance of the British Empire, a tightly-knit British economy and industrial system, trade unionism and the Labour Party, and the BBC as buttressing a sense of Britishness within and across the borders

[5] John Herson, *Divergent paths: Family histories of Irish emigrants in Britain 1820-1920* (Manchester, 2015), 6.

[6] Keith Robbins, *Nineteenth-Century Britain. England, Scotland and the Making of a Nation* (Oxford, 1989), 6.

[7] Hazel Easthope, "Fixed Identities in a Mobile World? The Relationship Between Mobility, Place and Identity," *Identities* xvi (2009): 61-82, at 65.

[8] Paul Ward, *Britishness Since 1870* (London, 2004), 7.

of the United Kingdom.[9] In particular, Martin Johnes emphasises how "war, religion and Empire created powerful common experiences and emotional bonds between England and Wales."[10] The close relationship between the two nations certainly has deep historical roots. Gwynfor Jones demonstrates that, since the time of incorporation, the Tudors and Stuarts used aspects of Welsh identity to confer a sense of antiquity and heritage on their rule and to foster a sense of common citizenship between England and Wales. [11] The Tudor Settlement (1536-43) emphasized existing interrelationships and interdependency and facilitated "administrative and legal unity" between England and Wales.[12] Chris Williams confirms the high 'level of interconnectedness' between the two nations, noting that the constitutional and legal relationship between England and Wales was 'transformed' by the Acts of Union with the English system of local government extending to Wales and all legislation that applied to England applying also to Wales.[13] Thus, as Kumar notes, from the mid-sixteenth to the late eighteenth centuries, "A high degree of cultural dissimilarity coexisted equably…with an equally high degree of political stability and willing acceptance of the Welsh position within the English and later British state."[14] The work of Aled Jones and Bill Jones also makes clear

[9] Krishan Kumar, *The Making of English National Identity* (Cambridge, 2010), 235-37.

[10] Martin Johnes, *Wales: England's Colony?* (Cardigan: Parthian, 2019), 4.

[11] Gwynfor Jones, *Early Modern Wales c.1525-1640* (Basingstoke, 1994), 75-90, 208-11.

[12] Ibid., 86.

[13] Chris Williams, "Problematizing Wales: An Exploration in Historiography and Postcoloniality," in *Postcolonial Wales*, ed. Jane Aaron and Chris Williams (Cardiff, 2005), 3-22, at 4-6.

[14] Kumar, *The Making of English National Identity*, 138.

the extent to which, by the nineteenth-century, Wales was a willing participant in the British imperial project.[15]

Following Linda Colley's seminal work on the forging of Britishness in the long eighteenth century, historians of modern Britain have largely worked with the idea of "concentric rings of territorial identities" to locality, nation, and imperial state.[16] However, there is comparatively little work exploring how dual national identities – the sense, for example, of identifying as *both* English and Welsh - are "complexly interwoven" within historical constructions of Britishness.[17] Avtar Brah highlights how, within the "diaspora space", there is often a requirement for an individual to "name an identity" which then renders invisible "all the other identities" available to them. She detects a deep-seated resistance to the idea of being "*both*".[18] Bronwen Walter, in her analysis of second generation Irish identity in late twentieth century Britain endorses this idea, calling for more recognition of "the possibility of *both/and* identities, rather than the *either/or* choices which characterise ideologies of assimilation and integration."[19] This article demonstrates how the Second World War both illuminated "a range of identifications" across Englishness and Welshness

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[15] Aled Jones and Bill Jones, "The Welsh World and the British Empire, c. 1851-1939: An Exploration," *The Journal of Imperial & Commonwealth History* 31, no. 2 (2003): 57-81.

[16] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* (New Haven, 1992); T C Smout, "Perspectives on the Scottish Identity," *Scottish Affairs* vi, (1994): 101-13, at 102.

[17] Bronwen Walter, Sarah Morgan, Mary J. Hickman and Joseph M. Bradley, "Family Stories, Public Silence: Irish Identity Construction Amongst the Second-generation Irish in England," *Scottish Geographical Journal* 118, no. 3 (2002): 201-17, at 202.

[18] Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora. Contesting Identities* (London, 1996), 3.

[19] Bronwen Walter, "English/Irish Hybridity: Second-generation Diasporic Identities" *International Journal of Diversity in Organisations* 5, no. 7 (2005/6), 17-24, at 18.

amongst the descended Welsh in England and provided the opportunity for the expression of dual identifications at the point of military enlistment. [20] Following Brah, it examines the diasporic tensions between subjective wartime constructions of "home" as "a mythic place of desire" (Wales) and "home" as the "lived experience of a locality" and "everyday social relations" (England).[21]

In this article I use the term English Welsh duality to reflect the neglected diasporic phenomenon of dual identification with both England and Wales among the second and third generation Welsh but also to acknowledge that the descended Welsh in twentieth century England did not themselves adopt a hyphenated identity.[22] In her study of diasporic identity, Walter emphasizes the ways in which second generation migrants born in Britain can express a sense of dual identity by identifying on the basis of "cultural background rather than simply birthplace."[23] In his landmark publication, *The Location of Culture*, Homi K Bhabha signals the importance of the space "in-between the designations of identity", writing that, "this interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy."[24] In their studies of the Irish diaspora in England, Mary J Hickman et al. characterize hybridity as the site where two hegemonic domains – in their case, Ireland and England – "intersect" in the lives of second-generation migrant children. They view hybridity as reflecting "the complexity of the identifications and positionings" of children of Irish origin in England as

[20] Walter, "English/Irish Hybridity," 20.

[21] Brah, *Cartographies*, 190, 192.

[22] Tanya Golash-Boza, "Dropping the Hyphen? Becoming Latino(a)-American through Racialized Assimilation," *Social Forces* 85, no. 1 (2006), 27-55.

[23] Walter, "English/Irish Hybridity," 19.

[24] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London, 1994), 4.

well as allowing for "the conceptualisation of new forms of identities which arise out of the experience of "dwelling-in-displacement."[25] Walter suggests that placename labels such as the "London Irish" allow "'both/and' identities to be expressed in an uncontroversial way." For second generation migrants, such names "acknowledged the duality of their placement in the city or town of their birth…but enabled them to retain and express a particular brand of Irishness."[26] Building upon their work, Marc Scully underlines the importance of "localised hybrid identities", pointing out that for second generation migrants, adopting a hybridized label creates a "conceptual space" for a different type of identity to be imagined, one that emphasizes the "localised specificity" of their identities.[27] Historically, therefore, the idea of being "London Welsh" or "Liverpool Welsh" has worked to acknowledge not just the presence of first generation Welsh settlers in England but also the expression of dual identifications amongst their descendants "varying contextually in time and space," foregrounded or concealed at different times.[28] Tony Murray, in his analysis of second generation Irish memoir, agrees, referring to "the inherently bifurcated nature of second-generation experience."[29] Whilst some work has been undertaken addressing the hybridity of the Irish, and more recently Italian, elements of "the diaspora space of Britain," there is

[25] Mary J Hickman, Sarah Morgan, Bronwen Walter and Joseph Bradley, "The Limitations of Whiteness and the Boundaries of Englishness," *Ethnicities* 5, no. 2 (2005): 160-82, at 160, 178; Walter et al., "Family Stories," 202.

[26] Walter, "English/Irish Hybridity," 20.

[27] Marc Scully, "'Plastic and Proud'?: Discourses of Authenticity Among the Second-generation Irish in England," *Psychology & Society* 2, no. 2 (2009): 124-35, at 133, 131.

[28] Walter et al., "Family Stories," 202.

[29] Tony Murray, "A Diasporic Vernacular? The Narrativization of Identity in Second-Generation Irish Memoir," *The Irish Review* 44 (2012), 75-88, at 85.

relatively little work addressing second generation identity formation within the Welsh diaspora.[30]

WELSH DIASPORIC IDENTITIES IN ENGLAND

By the beginning of the twentieth century, over 250,000 Welsh-born inhabitants lived in England, their families and descendants contributing to the urban cosmopolitanism of cities such as London and Liverpool.[31] Welsh migration to England had been steady throughout the

[30] Marc Scully, "Discourses of Authenticity and National Identity Among the Irish Diaspora in England" (PhD diss., The Open University, 2010.); Wendy Ugolini, *Experiencing War as the "Enemy Other". Italian Scottish Experience in World War II* (Manchester, 2011); See Colin G Pooley, "The Residential Segregation of Migrant Communities in Mid-Victorian Liverpool," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 2, no. 3 (1977): 364-82; Colin G Pooley, "Welsh Migration to England in the Mid-nineteenth Century," *Journal of Historical Geography* 9, no. 3 (1983): 287-306; Mike Benbough-Jackson, "Negotiating National Identity during St David's Day Celebrations on Merseyside, 1880-1900," in *Merseyside. Culture and Place*, ed. Mike Benbough-Jackson and Sam Davies (Newcastle, 2011), 263-90; D. Ben Rees, *The Welsh of Merseyside in the Twentieth Century* (Liverpool, 2001); *The Welsh in London 1500-2000*, ed. Emrys Jones, (Cardiff, 2001); Merfyn Jones, "Welsh Immigrants in the Cities of North West England. 1890-1930: Some Oral Testimony," *Oral History* 9, no. 2 (1981): 33-41; R Merfyn Jones, "The Liverpool Welsh," in *Liverpool Welsh & Their Religion*, ed. R Merfyn Jones and D. Ben Rees (Liverpool, 1984), 20-43.

[31] John Davies, *A History of Wales* (London, 1993), 443; John Belchem and Donald M MacRaild, "Cosmopolitan Liverpool" in *Liverpool 800. Culture, Character & History*, ed. John Belchem (Liverpool, 2006).

nineteenth century and was significantly reinvigorated during the interwar Depression.[32] It is worth noting that Welsh migration into England in the nineteenth century occurred against the backdrop of widely understood "social hierarchies" which, as Steve Garner notes, "created and maintained internal borders between the more and the less white."[33] Whilst in the United Kingdom, migrant groups such as the Irish, Jews, and Italians could often be racialized as internal "others", it could be argued that Welsh migrants, with their "Protestant work ethic" and claims to respectability were perceived as "more securely white."[34] In particular, the Welsh were able to utilize prevailing "constructions of whiteness" to position themselves favourably in comparison to the Irish who, in turn, were more vulnerable to racialized understandings of "who" fitted "where" in social hierarchies.[35] In areas of settlement such as Liverpool, this would often rest on the Welsh community's sense of their religious, political, and cultural "superiority" to the Irish Catholic population.[36] Mary Kells also notes how "white, English-speaking, middle class migrants" in twentieth-century

[32] Davies, *History of Wales*, 578-9.

[33] Steve Garner, *Whiteness. An Introduction* (London, 2007), 63.

[34]Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather. Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*, (New York, 1995), 52-3; Ugolini, *Experiencing War*, 26 ; Benbough-Jackson, "Negotiating National Identity," 265; Richard Dyer, *White* (London, 1997), 4. See also Donald M MacRaild and Philip Payton, "The Welsh Diaspora," in *British and Irish Diasporas. Societies, cultures and ideologi*es ed. Donald MacRaild, Tanja Bueltmann and J C D Clark (Manchester, 2019), 244-79.

[35] Carol Lynn McKibben, *Beyond Cannery Row. Sicilian Women, Immigration, and Community in Monterey, California, 1915-99* (Champaign, 2006), 82; Garner, *Whiteness*, 68.

[36] Merfyn Jones, "The Liverpool Welsh," 28; M Wynn Thomas, *The Nations of Wales 1890-1914* (Cardiff, 2016), xiii.

England, which could include the Welsh, are able to select which "aspects of the self to reveal" as their ability "to merge into the receiving society…is greater than for those migrants whose differentiation is visually unmistakeable."[37] Colin Pooley suggests that the first generation of Welsh settlers in Liverpool retained a sense of cultural distinctiveness through chapel attendance, language preservation, and Welsh language newspapers.[38] For the second generation however, as Merfyn Jones points out, being Welsh was very often a matter of personal choice or identification. [39] As he notes, those born into the diasporic Welsh community "were obliged to live with dual identities, they were conscious of their Welshness but they could not avoid being English at the same time."[40] For the second generation Welsh in twentieth-century Liverpool and London, therefore, their respective cultural frames of reference were as likely to be the modernist splendor of the Owen Owen retail store or the Cambrian Lawn Tennis Club in suburban Cricklewood as the local chapel, pointing to what Scully views as a specific form of Welshness "rooted" in English cities and localities.[41] The second and third generation Welsh did not share the "oppositional connotations" which were attached to the identity formation of racialized migrant groups such as the Irish and Italians in Britain but, rather, could benefit from their access to "a romantic cultural association which was not available to the 'non-ethnic' English."[42] Robbins agrees that second and third generation "secret Welshmen" in England could often experience an "unaccountable *hiraeth*

[37] Mary Kells, *Ethnic Identity Amongst Young Irish Middle Class Migrants in London* (London, 1995), 6.

[38] Pooley, "Welsh Migration," 302.

[39] Jones, "Liverpool Welsh," 29.

[40] Ibid., 35.

[41] Ad in *Y Ddolen,* Mar. 1939; Scully, "Discourses of Authenticity," 15.

[42] See Walter, "English/Irish Hybridity," 20, 21; Ugolini, *Experiencing War*, 3.

(nostalgia/longing) for the land of their fathers which they had never known."[43] Thus, the willingness of this generation of English men and women to signal some level of connectedness to Wales could also reflect a desire for authenticity or what Raphael Samuel defines as "the romance of otherness" conferred by the idea of a genealogical "second identity."[44]

MILITARIZED ENGLISH WELSH IDENTITIES IN WARTIME

In the run-up to the Second World War a critical role was played by well-connected Welsh diasporic elites in the formation of hybrid military units. By marking the Welsh presence in two of the largest English cities, these units signaled the perceived close ties between Wales and England as well as Wales's contribution to imperial constructions of Britishness. As Johnes notes, the Second World War both reaffirmed the interconnectedness between Welsh and British identities, but also promoted a heightened "sense of Welshness."[45] The imagining of Wales as a "powerful idea" that "could exert a deep emotional pull" clearly extended into the diaspora space of England.[46]

There was a historical precedent from the First World War when notables of the London Welsh community had campaigned to establish the 15th Battalion (London Welsh) Royal Welch Fusiliers, which was formally incorporated as one of the four battalions of the

[43] Robbins, *Nineteenth Century Britain*, 36.

[44] Thanks to [--] for this observation. Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory. Vol 1: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture* (London, 1994), 247; Author article on authenticity currently deleted to maintain the integrity of the review process.

[45] Johnes, *Wales Since 1939*, 3, 29.

[46] Ibid., 3.

First Brigade of the Welsh Army Corps.[47] Their Honorary President was Lloyd George, the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the group were instrumental in organising his landmark speech at Queen's Hall in which he famously signalled his support for the war and called for the creation of "a Welsh Army in the field."[48] In her analysis of nineteenth century martial race ideology, Heather Streets demonstrates how imperial understandings that some "races" were more martial than others led to the military promotion of particular masculine traits: "inherent loyalty, honour and devotion in addition to racial hardiness."[49] John S Ellis, whilst acknowledging that there were competing traditions of militarism and pacifism within traditional understandings of Welsh identity, points to the popularity and acceptability of notions of Welsh martiality which, by the early decades of the twentieth century, largely rested "on images accumulated during the warlike days of the distant past" when "the Welsh and their tribal Celtic forebears were known for their ferocity, tenacity and daring in battle."[50] When the London Welsh battalion departed for training in Llandudno in December 1914, Lloyd George gave a speech at their farewell dinner in London where he lauded the hybrid unit as the embodiment of the "martial spirit of the men of Wales." Drawing upon the

[47] "First Welsh Brigade,"*Llangollen Advertiser*, 5 March 1915. All Welsh newspapers have been accessed via the digital online collection, *Cymru 1914*, https://cymru1914.org/en/home.

[48] *Lloyd George. A Diary by Frances Stevenson*, ed. A J P Taylor (London, 1971), 2; *The Great War. Speech delivered by The Rt. Hon. David Lloyd George, MP* (London, 1914), 13.

[49] Heather Streets, *Martial Races. The military, race and masculinity in British imperial culture 1857-1914* (Manchester, 2004), 11.

[50] John S Ellis, "A pacific people – a martial race: pacifism, militarism and Welsh national identity," in *Wales and War. Society, Politics and Religion in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Matthew Cragoe and Chris Williams (Cardiff, 2007), 15-37, at 16.

discourse of an "imperial Welshness,"[51] he also emphasized Wales's historical importance within Britain: "Let everyone say when you come back, 'Gallant little Wales!' There was a notion that Wales, if Radical, was not Imperialist. Why, Wales founded the British Empire. Elizabeth Tudor was a Welsh lady, and Wales had a separate inheritance in the empire." [52] Although the battalion was primarily intended to recruit Welshmen resident in London, membership ultimately incorporated those of Welsh origin and non-Welshmen, so that, as Chris Williams notes, the 15th London Welsh essentially functioned as a site of "ethnic heterogeneity."[53] This flexibility over recruitment, indicating elasticity within contemporary constructions of Welshness in England, is significant.[54] For the founders of the battalion, the Welshness they evoked was largely imagined. Indeed, as Tomos Owen demonstrates in his analysis of the late nineteenth century Welsh diasporic newspaper, the *London Kelt*, those who were exiled from Wales were often most complicit in promoting a version of nationhood in which Welshness was "being constructed and asserted in the very act of its performance and articulation."[55]

[51] Jones and Jones, "The Welsh World," 57.

[52] "Mr. Lloyd George and the London Welsh Battalion," *Cambrian News*, 4 December 1914.

[53] Chris Williams, "Taffs in the Trenches: Welsh National Identity and Military Service 1914-1918," in *Wales and War* ed. Cragoe and Williams, 126-64, at 144.

[54] See James Ford, "The Art of Union and Disunion in the Houses of Parliament, c.1834-1928" (PhD diss., Nottingham University, 2016.)

[55] Tomos Owen, "The London Kelt 1895-1914: Performing Welshness, Imagining Wales," *Almanac: Yearbook of Welsh Writing in English*, 13 (2008-9): 109-125, at 110.

Typical amongst the battalion's recruits was the poet David Jones, who later immortalized his military service in the epic modernist poem, *In Parenthesis* (1937).[56] Born in Brockley in 1895 to an English mother and Welsh father, Jones was keen to enlist in a regiment with Welsh associations. Although he lived in England for most of his life, Jones consistently asserted a strong sense of himself as Welsh, writing in later life that, "From the age of about six, I felt I belonged to my father's people and their land, though brought up in an entirely English atmosphere." [57] Jones's professed dualism is apparent throughout *In Parenthesis:* the title itself is intended to signify "a kind of space between."[58] In the preface of the poem, Jones states: "These came from London. Those from Wales. Together they bore in their bodies the genuine tradition of the Island of Britain."[59] Indeed, T S Eliot characterizes Jones as "decidedly a Briton", due to his literary rendering of an ancient identity in which Welshness and Englishness co-exist and which have transmuted into his battalion's "admixture" of Londoners and Welshmen. [60] In his post-First World War paintings, Jones continued to create and reflect versions of Welshness filtered through the perspective of his

[56] Its bilingual title also signals dualism: David Jones, *In Parenthesis: seinnyessit e gledyf ym penn mameu* (London, 1937).

[57] David Jones, *The Dying Gaul and Other Writings* (London, 1978), 23.

[58] Jones, *In Parenthesis*, xv.

[59] Ibid., x.

[60] T. S. Eliot, "A Note of Introduction." in Jones, *In Parenthesis* (London, 1961); Jones, *In Parenthesis,* x. See also Paul Robichaud, *Making the Past Present: David Jones, the Middle Ages, & Modernism* (Washington, 2007).

lower-middle class English suburban life.[61] This military and cultural elision of Welsh English identities captured by Jones was to re-emerge at the outbreak of the Second World War.

SECOND WORLD WAR MOBILIZATION

Gary Sheffield notes how, during the Second World War, "regimental or other unit identities were assiduously cultivated in units that were based in England," and that this identity often had a "regional" dimension.[62] King writes that, in terms of combat motivation, twentieth-century citizen armies "appealed to the patriotism or national identities of their soldiers" and above all, to their shared "social identity."[63] This section discusses the phenomenon of two regiments which were based on the idea of *dual* national identifications. In the late 1930s, two new English Welsh military units emerged as a result of the government's decision to double the size of the Territorial Army recruitment.[64] In 1937, Leslie Hore-Belisha, as Secretary of State for War, also restated the government's decision to entrust the expansion of "anti-aircraft defence on the ground" to the Territorial Army.[65] This opened up a new space for the Welsh diasporic elites in London and Liverpool to attempt to assert the relevance of Welshness in their localities. Indeed, Owen's notion of "a kind of willed

[61] Jeremy Hooker, *Imagining Wales. A View of Modern Welsh writing in English* (Cardiff, 2001); Ariane Banks and Paul Hills, *The Art of David Jones. Vision and Memory* (Farnham, 2015).

[62] Gary Sheffield, "Englishness in the British Army of the Second World War," in *Fighting for Britain*?, ed. Ugolini and Pattinson, 49-64, at 51.

[63] King, *Combat Soldier*, 62.

[64] Ian R Grimwood, *A Little Chit of A Fellow* (Lewes, 2006).

[65] Ibid., 75.

imagining of a Welsh identity" is again relevant here.[66] It appears that the establishment of the two units was played out amidst wider anxieties about the visibility of the Welsh community in England and that the war offered an opportunity for the diasporic elite to resuscitate a sense of Welshness. At the same time, this militarized form of English Welsh duality did clearly have some resonance in mid-twentieth century England with the units creating and performing a version of Welshness which had a wide urban appeal. There is evidence that a number of Englishmen were prompted by their patrilineal ties, and a familial identification with Wales, to serve on behalf of the "Land of My Fathers" in these hybrid military formations.[67] King notes how, in wartime, "the appeal to manhood was often simultaneously an appeal of nationality." Indeed, British doctrine of the Second World War emphasized the need to develop the soldierly traits of "*patriotism*, loyalty, *pride of race* and a high sense of honour."[68] As with the First World War, notions of Welsh military valour – promoted through the lens of diasporic patriotism – held an appeal for a significant number of English recruits with a sense of mixed heritage.

In London, a Committee, populated by notables such as Hon. Col. General Sir Henry Ap Rhys Pryce and the Welsh coal and press magnate, Lord Kemsley,[69] was set up under the chairmanship of the former Prime Minister, Lloyd George, to recruit and fundraise for a hybrid regiment.[70] Although a commemorative booklet records that the London Welsh

[66] Owen, "London Kelt," 123.

[67] Author monograph, forthcoming.

[68] King, *Combat Soldier*, 75.

[69] *99th London Welsh Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment 1939-1945*, (1945), 15, 25 (41), Imperial War Museum (henceforth IWM).

[70] Colonel Arthur Evans, Speech to the House of Commons, 5 August 1943, *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons, 5th series, vol. 391 (1943), col. 2509.

regiment was "re-born" in 1939 as a result of the efforts of "patriotic Welshmen," the 99th (London Welsh) Heavy Anti-Aircraft battery was essentially a new territorial unit. With its headquarters at Iverna Gardens, Kensington, the intention was that the regiment would comprise of three batteries "to be formed from the Welsh community" residing in the capital.[71] Yet, in practice, the recruitment reach of the regiment stretched west to Bristol and north to Birmingham, Manchester, and Hull, suggesting that constructions of London Welshness were, by necessity, malleable and were as likely to include non-Welshmen and those of Welsh heritage as those born in Wales.[72] Londoner David Jones's discovery, when he had attempted to join the Welsh Horse yeomanry regiment in 1914, that he was deemed "Welsh enough" by the military authorities underscores this flexibility in approach. [73]

The inaugural dinner of the London Welsh regiment was held in July 1939 at the Park Lane Hotel in the presence of Lloyd George. Not only did the former Prime Minister provide continuity between the London Welsh military formations of both world wars but he also held a powerful totemic value as a signifier of Welshness in England. His attendance at the dinner enabled Hore-Belisha to situate the new unit within a strongly Welsh heritage,

[71] Letter from R V Nind Hopkins to War Office, 8 May 1939, T 161/861, The National Archives (hereafter TNA).

[72] IWM, 25 (41). Johnes notes how the presence of non-Welshmen serving in Welsh regiments during the Second World War did not diminish regimental Welshness. Indeed, "what on the surface might appear to be national symbols" –such as "eating the leek" – "were in practice driven more by the need to create personal relationships and a common bond between diverse sets of men." See Martin Johnes, "Welshness, Welsh Soldiers and the Second World War," in *Fighting for Britain?*, ed. Ugolini and Pattinson, 65-88, at 73.

[73] *Dai Greatcoat. A Self-portrait of David Jones in His Letters*, ed. René Hague (London, 1980), 26-7.

pronouncing: "this night will be recalled because the greatest Welshman of his age took pride of place at what might be termed your christening ceremony. By his presence alone he enshrouds you at your birth with a full panoply of tradition."[74] At the same time, Hore-Belisha invoked a Shakespearian vision of Englishness which both reflected the prevalent use of the term English "as a synonym for 'British'" during the war[75] and signalled the unit's dual inheritances:

> Guns and searchlights are spread in a wide chequer-board over the land, by lonely copses, alongside farm buildings, in the hills, in the Fen country, keeping an unceasing watch day and night. What a strange transformation since Shakespeare wrote of our country as This fortress built by Nature for herself against invasion and the hand of war. He thought it was enough that England should be "bound-in with the triumphant sea." But now our vigilance is set upon another element.[76]

The 99th batteries were initially based in Kent and Croydon with Lloyd George's son, Major Gwilym Lloyd George, taking command of the first battery.[77] The social profile of the typical recruit of the 99th is encapsulated in their in-house newsletter, *On Target*, which was produced by 303 battery whilst based at Shirley Park, Croydon and which, in its spontaneity, irreverent humour, and lampooning style, mimics trench journals of the First World War such as *The Wipers Times*. In particular, it adopts what Christopher Westhorp defines as a

[74] *Western Morning News*, 19 July 1939, 7.

[75] Kenneth Lunn, "Reconsidering 'Britishness': The Construction and Significance of National Identity in Twentieth Century Britain," in *Nation and Identity in Contemporary Europe*, ed. Brian Jenkins and Spyros Sofos (London, 1996), 83-100, at 87.

[76] *Western Morning News*, 19 July 1939, 7.

[77] *Y Ddolen*, June 1939, 17.

"recognisable editorial formula" with its mixture of in-jokes and jargon, regular contributors (cartoons by "Kilo"), use of comic pseudonyms ("Carroll Lewis"), and original poems and short stories.[78] A satirical piece entitled "The Army and the Man" alludes to the typical civilian occupations of the 99th gunners as teachers, librarians, and bank managers.[79] This occupational bias towards the professions mirrors Helen McCartney's depiction of pre- First World War territorial battalions as "socially exclusive" and largely middle class in composition drawing upon the educational and sporting milieu of public and grammar schools. [80] The newsletter also highlights the accommodation and acceptance of dual English Welsh identities with the titles of its articles interchangeably addressing both strands of identity, and the plurality of Welshness itself, in terms of language: "Outposts of Empire: Oswestry," "Night Falls on Shirley," "Wales and War–Site," and "Er Cof Anwyl Am Gymry Llundain."[81] Within the latter feature, recounting the symbolic burial of a "Dragon of Wales, rampant, on a piece of rough board" on the occasion of the departure of some gunners for overseas service, the author recites the funeral oration:

> My fellow Welshmen, and those born this side of Offa's Dyke with whom we are proud to serve, and who, we hope, are not ashamed to serve with us….Those who go tomorrow are fortunate in that they go together as is fitting for the Cymry, the name by which we Welshmen call ourselves, and which signifies in its derivative meaning, "The Band of Brothers." And so, my brothers, Englishmen and Welshmen, tonight as

[78] *The Wipers Times*, Introduction by Christopher Westhorp (London, 2013).

[79] *On Target*, 1, no.1, April 1940, E.J.3487, IWM.

[80] Helen B McCartney, *Citizen Soldiers. The Liverpool Territorials in the First World War* (Cambridge, 2005), 5, 26.

[81] *On Target*, 1, no.1, Apr. 1940; *On Target*, 1, no. 2, May 1940, E.J.3487, IWM.

the mists roll down from the mountains of Wales and the darkness covers the valleys, Arthur does not sleep in Avalon.[82]

The dual nature of the 99th London Welsh also inspired some of the wartime output of the poet Keidrych Rhys, Welsh editor of the literary magazine, *Wales*, and promoter of Welsh writing in English.[83] Rhys joined the London Welsh as a gunner in July 1940 and was posted variously to Scapa Flow, Great Yarmouth, and Kent, where he was based during the Blitz.[84] In his contemporaneous poetry, he represented the battery as a site of closer union between Wales and England and underlined the potential of the conflict to draw the two nations closer together. His 1942 poem, "Tragic Guilt" begins: "No. I'm not an Englishman with a partisan religion. My roots lie in another region, Though ranged alongside yours" and speaks of the sense of shared "comradeship and pity" experienced in "an open door blitz city."[85] His other wartime poems depict life within the London Welsh including "Poem for a Green Envelope" which, through naming, positions the unit within a dual identity:

And the celebrities the soccer professional the zylo-
phone player, Tich with cauliflower ears,
Danny Williams, the rhythm brothers, Jack Hulbert's
collaborators – the ex-war policeman
chaplain to this misshapen staring mass

[82] *On Target*, 1, no. 2, May 1940, E.J.3487, IWM.

[83] Glyn Jones, *The Dragon Has Two Tongues*: *Essays on Anglo-Welsh Writers and Writing* (London, 1968).

[84] *Keidrych Rhys. The Van Pool: Collected Poems*, ed. Charles Mundye (Bridgend, 2012), 28.

[85] Keidrych Rhys, *The Van Pool and Other Poems* (London, 1942), 37-8.

…

Brigade confirmed three totally destroyed last night

The Hon. Colonel Sir Henry ap Rhys Pryce says

We have a good name at the War Office.[86]

A LONDON WELSH CASE STUDY: J R DAVIES

Originally drawn into the male world of sociability, sport, and singing offered by the local London Welsh rugby team, bank clerk John Rhys Davies was one of those persuaded to join the 99th Territorials.[87] Born in Wandsworth Common in July 1906 to a Post Office clerk from Cardiganshire [Ceredigion] and an English mother, Davies was raised within "a Welsh chapel background," attending "Eisteddfods" and socialising within a large extended network of Welsh relations in London.[88] The Imperial War Museum holds 128 letters written by Davies whilst on military service overseas with the 88th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Eighth Army in the Middle East, North Africa, and Italy from 1941-45. These letters were typed up by Davies on the occasion of the golden wedding anniversary of his parents, to whom they were originally written, before being donated to the museum. [89] The manuscript is a faithful reproduction of the original letters and provides five years' worth of sustained correspondence: encapsulating what Margaretta Jolly defines as an act of "self-preservation

[86] Ibid., 25-28.

[87] Interview with John Rhys Davies by Peter M Hart, March 2003, 26841, IWM.

[88] Ibid.

[89] Private Papers of J R Davies, 13167, IWM. Thanks to Mary-Lynne Jones for permission to cite from these papers.

through perfect communication."[90] As Davies ended the war as a Lance Bombardier, it also offers rare insights into the lived experience of military service from the perspective of the non-commissioned ranks. For the historian, letters are useful both as texts and as "concrete historical artefacts strongly rooted in particular contexts;" they also "act as key cultural sites for the construction of the self."[91] The existence of an addressee distinguishes letters from other forms of life writing such as diaries and memoirs. As Janet Gurkin Altman notes, the epistolary experience is a reciprocal one: "the letter writer simultaneously seeks to affect his reader and is affected by him."[92] Thus whilst the letter "connotes privacy and intimacy," the need for an audience facilitates movement between the private and the public self.[93] Jolly also underscores the importance of the relationship between the writer and recipient, writing that letters "construct fantasies of identity" and "spring from and codify ideal relationships, preserving the self through appeal to the other."[94] Letters are therefore particularly useful in allowing us to explore the ways in which narrative is essential to identity formation.[95] The focus of Davies's epistolary world was his family home: 2 Elsynge Road, London SW18. The letters are written in English but are littered with Welsh vocabulary, phrases, song titles, and

[90] Margaretta Jolly, "Myths of Unity. Remembering the Second World War Through Letters and Their Editing," in *Arms and the Self. War, the Military, and Autobiographical Writing*, ed. Alex Vernon (Kent, 2005), 144 – 70, at 159.

[91] Rebecca Earle, "Introduction: Letters, Writers and the Historian," in *Epistolary Selves. Letters and Letter-Writers, 1600-1945*, ed. Rebecca Earle (Aldershot, 1999), 1-12, at 2.

[92] Janet Gurkin Altman, *Epistolarity. Approaches to a Form* (Columbus, 1982), 88.

[93] Ibid., 187.

[94] Jolly, "Myths of Unity," 164.

[95] Margaretta Jolly and Liz Stanley, "Letters as/not a Genre," *Life Writing* 2, no. 2 (2005): 91-118, at 92.

place names. They are addressed to "My dear all" suggesting they are also directed at Davies's wider family group beyond his parents and underlining how Davies not only writes with an awareness of "a potentially communal" audience but is also communicating within a familial embrace of assumed Welshness.[96] Davies's letters are light-hearted and humorous in tone, and his agenda is clearly to both reassure and entertain his family back home. Educated at the "semi-public" Emanuel School in Clapham from the age of eleven, Davies is a literate and well-read soldier with a self-confessed passion for "Literature" and displays confidence in his abilities as an epistolary communicator.[97] Davies's letters home begin in Palestine in November 1941 when he spends a day's leave at a market in Jerusalem:

> We left the Old City by the Jaffa gate and saw something of the labyrinth of bazaars with their strange wares... The bizarre combination of the ancient and modern shops – but what prices! They wanted 14/6 for a copy of "How Green is my Valley." We spent a most enjoyable evening seeing "Gone With The Wind"…The following morning behold me once more amidst the street scene of the old city doing a spot more mooching. I found the traditional site of Pontius Pilate's Judgment Hall, now a convent. A jovial old nun showed me round; I think I won her approval by translating a Welsh inscription for her.[98]

Krista Cowman notes how, for British soldiers serving in France during the First World War, visiting towns and cities behind the lines enabled them to make connections with urban landscapes back home and to "access a sense of normality through a nostalgic

[96] Earle, "Introduction," 7.

[97] 26841 IWM.

[98] Letter, 10 November 1941, 13167, IWM.

revisioning of the pre-war past."[99] At the outset of this letter, Davies remarks that Jerusalem has a "very welcome Englishness about the landscape." Yet within this extract there is also a double assertion of Welshness: not only is Davies clearly proud of his ability to provide a Welsh translation but he also expresses an interest in the bestselling wartime novel about South Wales, *How Green Was My Valley* (1939).[100] Davies's strong identification with Wales is further evidenced throughout his letters home. When he is stationed in North Africa and Italy, he always locates a local Welsh Society which provides "services in Welsh on Sunday afternoons;" these typically comprise "some pennillion singing, some jokes told in Welsh, a rendering of Fflat Huw Puw and…the evergreen Dafydd y Garreg Wen, and Ffarwel Maria."[101] At one service, led by Rev. J.O. Jones of Towyn, Davies is "rather gratified to find after all this time that I could understand almost every word."[102] A year later, in Caserta, he finds himself amongst a Welsh-speaking congregation and is relieved to find he has "no great difficulty in joining in the conversation."[103] Towards the end of the war Davies reencounters former colleagues from the London Welsh battery in attendance at these Welsh services, demonstrating how dual identifications could be sustained even when the gunners had been transferred from their original regiment.[104]

In his letters home, Davies repeatedly expresses his nostalgia for different parts of Wales, thus expanding the notion of the imagined "home" shared with his parental

[99] Krista Cowman, "Touring Behind the Lines: British Soldiers in French towns and Cities during the Great War," *Urban History* 41, no.1 (2014): 105-23, at 108, 122.

[100] Citation omitted to maintain the integrity of the review process.

[101] Letter, 30 September 1944, 13167, IWM.

[102] Ibid., 7 June 1944.

[103] Ibid., 1 July 1945.

[104] Ibid., 17 April 1945.

correspondents in London. In 1942 when he is based near Tobruk, he writes, "My bivvy on a rocky crag overlooks the sea and the view from below might be reminiscent of a bit of Cardiganshire coast line" and whilst based in Italy from 1943 onwards, he regularly compares the surrounding landscape to Aberglaslyn in Snowdonia.[105] Davies always remembers to proclaim the significance of 1 March, St David's Day, writing to his parents in 1943: "On this auspicious day I should really have made an effort to conjure you a few lines in our native tongue."[106] The following year, he states:

> Hope you're all wearing your leeks today or are they rationed?! We've just been listening to the midday Welsh Half Hour – a very good selection – but unfortunately they switched the current off in the middle of "O na byddai'n haf o hyd" – an outrageous bit of sabotage by our Anglo-Saxon foes.[107]

The radio is a particularly crucial medium through which Davies maintains both his sense of Welshness and a reciprocal relationship with relatives back home. When the war broke out in September 1939, the fledgling BBC Wales found itself "fully integrated into the BBC's unified Home Service." However, over two hours of Welsh-language broadcasting on the BBC's 261-meter wavelength was authorized, primarily for broadcasts to Europe. In early 1943, the English-language production, *Welsh Half Hour*, which incorporated "regional news, commentary and a few songs," debuted on the Home Service.[108] Davies's letters regularly report on his listening habits, whether tuning in to hear the St David's singers, or a

[105] Ibid., 22 November 1942; 6 October 1943; 31 August 1945.

[106] Ibid., 1 March 1943.

[107] Ibid., 1 March 1944.

[108] Hajkowski, *BBC and National Identity*, 182-85.

Welsh tenor singing in "The Immortal Hour."[109] In one letter he refers to his Welsh wife Margaret, who has evacuated to the Rhondda Valley, saying that he was able to hear a broadcast from Blaenclydach at which she was present: "the choir sang well and the too-brief community singing of Bryn Calfaria was grand. I did my best to imagine that I could hear Margaret's voice!"[110] He regularly attempts to tune into *Welsh Half Hour*, writing in September 1943: "Listened with much interest to a BBC entertainment for the GIB Welsh Society. Heard some pennillion singing and some personal characteristic messages from the Rhondda and other parts of Wales. I wonder if you were listening?"[111] Here, Davies clearly positions himself as part of a transcultural imagined Welsh community. There is a sense of reciprocity, a shared connection across borders, regardless of the distance between him and his family. Indeed, this vision of "home" is crucial to him; sometimes he literally dreams of his chapel congregation back in Clapham.[112]

Johnes writes that, 'it would be difficult to deny sport's place in the inventing, maintaining and projecting of the idea of a Welsh national identity within and outside Wales's blurred borders'.[113] It is notable that Davies often asserts his selfhood through an embrace of rugby as a key marker of Welshness, frequently constructing his own sense of Celtic identity in opposition to the "Saxons":

> Yesterday morning with a boisterous wind blowing we played a great international Rugby match here – Wales V. England. We had pruned and trimmed a particular area of desert especially for this game and of course heralded it with much advance

[109] Letters 18 and 23 June 1943; 11 August 1943, 13167, IWM.

[110] Ibid., 23 July 1944.

[111] Ibid., 20 September 1943.

[112] Ibid., 18 March 1943; 6 December 1944.

[113] Martin Johnes, *A History of Sport in Wales* (Cardiff, 2005), 109.

> publicity and propaganda. The Saxons spilt much good red blood on the pitch but they were not quite good enough for us.[114]

On another occasion he writes of his intention to play in an England v. Wales rugby match, noting "To whip our Celtic blood into the necessary fervour, we hope to preface the game with a stirring rendering of *Sospan* [Little Saucepan]."[115] At the same time, Davies's sense of identity is constantly shifting, a reflection of his own duality. When based in Italy, he both distances himself from English troops - "We tell the Anglo-Saxons here that most of the Italian language has been borrowed from the Welsh – 'See Naples and Dai'"[116] - whilst also seamlessly representing them: "we soon started to win legendary fame as English Milords."[117] Furthermore, his expressions of camaraderie with Welsh servicemen are not boundless. When he encounters a Welsh driver from Aberdare whose ambition for postwar Wales is "to patrol our frontiers when we get back…to keep those ****English tourists out," Davies is dismissive, complaining to his parents, "He just poured it out for half an hour."[118]

Significantly, although Davies is keen to foreground his Welshness, in terms of his social networks and preferred leisure activities, his letters also underline his cultural rootedness in London. Indeed, throughout the correspondence, Davies is equally attuned to the nostalgic appeal of his birthplace. In March 1942, travelling on an army lorry in Cairo, he remarks on "the exquisite music" of two former London bus conductors discussing making "a

[114] Letter, 27 December 1942, 13167, IWM.

[115] Ibid., 1 March 1943.

[116] Ibid., 6 October 1943.

[117] Ibid., 17 May 1944.

[118] Ibid., 14 August 1944

brew."[119] Indeed, in many ways, Englishness - or the classic tropes associated with wartime constructions of England[120] - is interwoven throughout the letters to his parents. For example, on 10 July 1942, Davies writes, "The garden I suppose is looking pleasant now…it will be grand to see English flowers again after these months of sand and rock" and on another occasion: "carpets of small bluebells, buttercups, daisies, and poppies bring vivid recollections of an English meadow."[121] The following month, he states, "The remarkable speed with which some of the letters have travelled here lately makes home, you and the gardens, and flowers, and joints going into ovens, and Sunday afternoon teas seem so much nearer."[122] In October 1942, when he is based near Tobruk he makes specifically London references, saying that "Vauxhall (my pet aversion) on a damp and foggy day is a Utopia in comparison to El Adem" and he likens the movement of a tank column across the desert to the noise of "about 10,000 Edgware to Morden underground trains."[123] When, in January 1944, he hears a concert party rendition of "Five Minutes in Petticoat Lane" by a cockney comedian, he muses that, "I almost fancied I was back in Northcote Road on a Saturday night."[124] Shifting from lowbrow to highbrow within his cultural frames of reference, Davies also includes an occasional literary reference to Keats or Coleridge alongside his elegiac musings about the English landscape.[125] In December 1942, his slight misremembering of

[119] Ibid., 8 March 1942.

[120] Lucy Noakes, "'Deep England': Britain, the Countryside and the English in the Second World War," in *Fighting for Britain*, ed. Ugolini and Pattinson, 25-47.

[121] Letter, 27 February 1943, 13167, IWM.

[122] Ibid., 30 August 1942

[123] Ibid., 24 October 1942

[124] Ibid., 28 July 1943

[125] Ibid., 8 August 1943; 12 September 1943

Rupert Brooke's poem, "The Old Vicarage" does not detract from his immersion in English literary tradition:

> I'm still very fit and quite full of beans. At my side is a Rupert Brooke, left behind by a fleeing Jerry. I've just been dipping into it to find my old favourite *Grantchester*. Wish I could furnish my landscape with a few "green glooms" and tunnels of chestnuts," and an "unkempt hedgerow or two complete with English unofficial rose…![126]

Davies's poetic ode to Englishness peaks in spring 1943 with the whimsical reflection: "Oh to be in England now that April's here!"[127] Thus, whilst allusions to Wales and Welshness are foregrounded in his letters and the connections he chooses to make overseas are Welsh - societies, radio programmes, rugby teams - Davies's asserted sense of Welshness is often disrupted, with his English attachments claiming significant space in his familial letters. Overall, an English sensibility is displayed alongside a deep Welsh identification within Davies's self-narration, illuminating an almost unconscious split in his own self-identity: a hybrid sense of self. Davies's letters demonstrate the equal importance of both his Welsh and English inheritances, his willingness to draw upon the tropes of English Romanticism as well as signal his Welsh attachments with his allusions to rugby, chapel, and song. This supports Hickman et al.'s notion of hybridity as "the intersection of two hegemonic domains of rootedness, nation, and authenticity" whereby, in this scenario, Wales represents Davies's "imaginings" whilst England represents "locality and citizenship."[128] As Brah notes, the

[126] Ibid., 5 December 1942.

[127] Ibid., 31 March 1943.

[128] Hickman et al., "Limitations," 173.

"multi-placedness of 'home' in the imaginary of people in the diaspora does not mean that such groups do not feel anchored in the place of settlement."[129]

Wales is Davies's family's imagined "home" but England is the home he writes to, where his parents and siblings live, where he and his "Ma" were born. Essentially England *is* home. At the time of the "flying bombs" he expresses concern for his parents' safety, counselling them to move out of London.[130] He also acknowledges his mother's difference, often locating her in more English settings: "Remember the famous 'Torna a Sorrento' (a sort of Italian 'Dros y Gareg' or 'Ffarwel i Llangyfelach') which Caruso used to pour out with such passionate intensity (or as Ma would have it 'make that horrible din about')?"[131] Ironically, Davies's expressed longing or nostalgia for home, summed up by the Welsh world, *hiraeth*, often takes the form of reminiscing about England within his correspondence. Fundamentally, Davies's observations to his parents contain fascinating insights into his own lived subjectivity and illuminate the complex interconnections between his English and Welsh sense of selves. Here, as M. Wynn Thomas suggests, Bhabha's notion of hybridity can usefully be applied to "the meeting, mingling and cross-fertilization" of English Welsh identities, a space "where cultural differences 'contingently'" touch.[132] For Davies, his Welsh upbringing in London anchors his sense of belonging whilst serving overseas, underscoring the significance of English Welsh dual identifications. As a continuation of this, Davies contemporaneously positions himself as part of the British Army at war and expresses

[129] Brah, *Cartographies*, 194.

[130] Letters 3 July 1944; 3 August 1944, 13167, IWM.

[131] Ibid., 23 July 1945.

[132] M. Wynn Thomas, "'A Grand Harlequinade': The Border Writing of Nigel Heseltine," *Welsh Writing in English*, 11, (2006-7): 51-68, at 52; Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 296.

retrospective pride in being a member of the iconic Eighth Army, as evidenced by the title he gives to his unpublished manuscript, "The Diary of a Desert Rat."[133]Arguably, Davies's life-writing demonstrates the existence of a particular strand of dual identity in wartime, which by accommodating a small number of servicemen for whom Welshness was, in Mo Moulton's phrase, a "constitutive" part of being English, contributed to constructions of pluralistic Britishness.[134]

A LIVERPOOL WELSH CASE STUDY: SHREWSBURY HOUSE "OLD BOYS"

The 46th Battalion (Liverpool Welsh) Royal Tank Regiment was formally constituted in April 1939 following a campaign spearheaded by the Welsh journalist, Harold Tudor, who wrote "Cymric Causerie" columns in the *Liverpool Echo* under the pseudonym "Talwrn," and supported by other elite members of Welsh social networks in Liverpool such as local councillors, businessmen, and ex-army officers. [135] They were galvanized into action by news of the establishment of the 99th London Welsh and also by a form of ethnic competitiveness with the Liverpool Scottish and Liverpool Irish battalions which existed in the city.[136] Unlike these two battalions, the 46th had no First World War precursor. In his study of St David's Day in nineteenth century Liverpool, Mike Benbough-Jackson notes how initiatives sponsored by the Welsh elites in Liverpool were often "struggles to assert selected interests

[133] Davies attended Eighth Army reunions every year. Personal communication, 2012.

[134] Moulton argues that Irishness can be viewed as "a constitutive element" of Englishness in the interwar period. *Ireland and the Irish in Interwar England* (Cambridge, 2014), 7.

[135] "'Talwrn's' Cymric Causerie," *Liverpool Echo*, 12 April 1939, 3.

[136] "A Cymric Causerie," *Liverpool Echo*, 22 March 1939, 14. See also *A Short History of the 46th (Liverpool Welsh) Royal Tank Regiment* (1949), RH87, 46 RTR 7431, Tank Museum Archive (henceforth TMA).

of an aspiring nation, albeit one whose people were not as active in their own interests as the Irish, successful as the Scots and as established as the English."[137] As part of a transnational diaspora, this "self-appointed Welsh community leadership" sought to "diffuse ideas of Welshness."[138] By the turn of the twentieth century, the Welsh had such a sizable long-established presence in Liverpool that the city was often characterized as "The Capital of Wales": "the great centre towards which the inhabitants of the six northern counties of Wales have always looked as the sphere for their enterprise and the basis for their fortunes."[139] Indeed, the creation of the 46th Liverpool Welsh can be viewed as what Katie Pickles terms the "localised invention" of a martial Welsh tradition.[140] From the outset, the "dual association" of the unit was signalled by "its regimental crest of the Red Dragon of Wales and its brigade flash of the Liver Bird."[141] External press commentary enthusiastically endorsed the Welsh nature of the new unit as understood by a Liverpool audience with the continual use of naming to anchor the men in a tradition of Welshness. For example, in May 1939, the Liverpool *Daily Post* reports on one platoon:

> As might be expected, the Joneses are well to the fore in the roll of names. Although there was no parade as yet, the sergeant-major is looking ruefully down at the thirty-five Joneses already there. In addition to the members of the Jones family, there are

[137] Benbough-Jackson, "Negotiating National Identity," 286.

[138] Jones and Jones, "The Welsh World", 62, 68.

[139] Belchem and MacRaild, "Cosmopolitan Liverpool", 344-45.

[140] Katie Pickles, *Female Imperialism and National Identity: Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire* (Manchester, 2009), 37.

[141] Ronald Clare, "L'pool Welsh Disband Near Corinth," *Liverpool Echo*, 22 February 1946, 4.

> twenty-five recruits who answer to the name of Williams. Hughes and Owen are not so plentiful, although the Owens monopolise the column under "O."[142]

This monitoring by the Liverpool press indicates an anticipation of the comic potential of this "Welsh" unit but at the same time, an acknowledged sense of ownership of Welshness as an integral part of the city's cosmopolitan identity. This reflects what Hickman et al. define as the articulation of a second generation identity contingent upon "locational specificity."[143]At the same time, there were some instabilities surrounding the promotion of a Welsh martial identity with both the Liverpool Scottish and Liverpool Irish regiments, re-raised for the Second World War, overshadowing the 46th in terms of recruitment figures and positive press coverage.[144] Streets notes how within martial race discourse, Scottish Highlanders were traditionally the "poster boys" of the British Army, acting as "an image of ideal masculinity and racial superiority to which all potential recruits could aspire" whilst the Irish were acknowledged as "good and brave fighters."[145] In this competitive context, the idea of Welsh martial prowess initially struggled to assert itself and, in local press reports, a note of anxiety began to be struck that recruitment amongst the Welsh in Liverpool was rather sluggish.

The regiment was originally intended to be made up of volunteers from the Merseyside area "of Welsh descent or connection"[146] and it had been publicly anticipated by

[142] "'Macs' Join The 'Joneses'," *Daily Post,* 31 May 1939.

[143] Hickman et al., "Limitations," 178.

[144] See 'Liverpool Scottish Regimental Association' *Daily Post* 19 June 1939; 'Honour for Irish Battalion' *Daily Post,* 20 December 1939; "Welsh-Irish TA Units," *Liverpool Echo,* 21 April 1939.

[145] Streets, *Martial Races,* 181, 4, 169.

[146] RH87, 46 RTR 7431, TMA.

the chairman of the Young Wales South Liverpool Society that "the younger element among the strong Welsh community" in Liverpool would respond "willingly and loyally."[147] However, it is worth noting that such organizations were not themselves fully reflective of the composition of the Welsh community in the city. Merfyn Jones notes that, whilst the Young Wales Society was established in Liverpool in 1893 "to command the support and adhesion of Young Welshmen of every class and creed who, by pure force of patriotism, we hope to see welded together into a common brotherhood," by the mid-twentieth century it was more of a social club than "a politically significant society" and had declining influence.[148] This mirrors Johnes's contention that Wales, with its history of immigration, has always been an "imagined community" and, for its inhabitants, Welshness has "a plethora of different meanings for the people who possess and make it."[149] The founders of the regiment were possibly more aware of the diluted nature of Welsh identity in Liverpool than their confident public pronouncements admitted and set the following broad eligibility criteria for admission:

> (1) Welsh, or of Welsh descent; (2) married to a Welsh woman; (3) an old boy of any Welsh school; (4) a member of a Welsh cultural society on Merseyside; (5) an ex-serviceman who has served with a Welsh regiment or Welsh T.A. unit.[150]

Fundamentally, therefore, there was a disconnect between the ambitious intention of the founders of the 46th to invent a tradition of Welsh warriors in Liverpool and a haziness around the eligibility criteria which worked to subvert this objective. After an initial burst of

[147] "Liverpool-Welsh Battalion Developments," *Daily Post,* 22 April 1939.

[148] Jones, "Liverpool Welsh," 36-37.

[149] Johnes, *A History of Sport,* 109.

[150] "Brisk Start of Welsh Battalion," *Daily Post,* 15 May 1939.

enthusiasm in attestation, within weeks recruitment "slowed down to almost a standstill" and there were reported anxieties that "the exclusive character of the unit will have to be disturbed."[151] Sydney Blackhurst, the West Lancashire Association Public Relations Officer, remarked on "the failure of the potential strength to come up to expectations."[152]

This dilemma played out amidst a wider anxiety that the "Welsh" community itself barely existed. In 1943, O E Roberts, the secretary of the Merseyside branch of Undeb Cymru Fydd, sent a circular to Welsh contacts and societies in the north west region of England to ascertain the level of involvement with "Welsh activities" and, more specifically, whether there were "many young Welsh people" in their locality who took "an interest in Welsh matters."[153] The replies from Ellesmere Port, Blackburn, and St Helens were broadly negative. The latter's representative said of the second generation, "they have tended to marry English brides and have then deserted everything Welsh." He concluded sadly, "Before the boys went away they had already lost their Welsh if they had it to lose in the first place."[154] This sample contrasts with the case study of J R Davies, discussed above, who with his regular attendance at Welsh chapel in London and wartime marriage to a Welsh woman, had more visibly opted to retain his 'cultural allegiance' to Wales and Welshness.[155] Overall,

[151] "Call To Welshmen," *Liverpool Echo,* 7 June 1939; "Welsh Tank Unit Recruiting," *Daily Post*, 13 June 1939.

[152] "Lull in ARP Recruiting," *Daily Post,* 7 June 1939.

[153] O. E. Roberts's Undeb Cymru Fydd Papers, Circular from O E Roberts, 14 April 1943, GB 0222, BMSS OER, Bangor University Archive (hereafter BUA). Thanks to the Edinburgh Welsh Society for providing a translation of this material.

[154] Letter from Meurig Walters, 25 April 1943, GB 0222, BMSS OER, BUA.

[155] Davies met his wife at chapel in London, marrying in 1941. Personal communication from Mary-Lynne Jones, 19 August 2012; Murray, "A Diasporic Vernacular?," 80.

however, the correspondence provides a wartime snapshot of falling chapel and church attendance in England amongst the second and third generation, their disengagement from Welsh associational culture, and a tendency for this to be attributed to intermarriage and interaction with the "English." Thus, although the 46th achieved full strength by end of July 1939, there is a sense of underlying awareness amongst the founders that the imagined community of Welsh people that the regiment was set up to appeal to no longer existed in any recognisable form.[156] The war provided an opportunity, to adapt Owen's phrase, to will it back into existence. Fundamentally, therefore, there was a distance between the desires of the diasporic elite to forge a wartime vehicle of patriotic Welshness and the more prosaic realities of a long established Welsh presence in Liverpool.

A useful way to examine this rupture is to analyze the experience of eleven troopers in the 46th Liverpool Welsh who shared a pre-existent group identity as "Old Boys" of Shrewsbury House, a youth club in the working-class Everton district, set up as part of the philanthropic public school mission movement by Shrewsbury private school in 1903.[157] The fact that Everton was considered one of the "three main Welsh enclaves" in Liverpool, possibly explains why, in 1939, eleven of its members volunteered for the Liverpool Welsh, constituting around twenty per cent of the youth club's servicemen.[158] Their experiences serve to illuminate the contested nature of diasporic military identity construction and highlight the tensions between the high-minded objectives of the unit's founders and the reality of its recruiting base. Since 1928, the Shrewsbury House Old Boys' Association had been run by an Old Salopian, Barr Adams. Adams was thirty four when the war broke out,

[156] "'Liverpool Welsh' On View," *Daily Post,* 31 July 1939.

[157] Nigel Scotland, *Squires in the Slums: Settlements and Missions in Late Victorian Britain* (London, 2007).

[158] Jones, "Liverpool Welsh," 22.

working in a directorial position at the oil refining company, James Light & Son.[159] During the Second World War, Adams encouraged the "Old Boys" who were in the forces to write to him; he then collated extracts from their letters and recirculated them as "news sheets," sent to all members of the Club at his own expense.[160] In 1944, Adams set out to publish the news sheets in a book, *The Club of War*, to act as an exemplar for junior members of the club, and a draft version of this unpublished manuscript is held in the Shrewsbury House archive. The archive, managed by a group of volunteers, also holds copies of the letters Barr Adams wrote to those who were on active service.[161] This material collectively provides a rare insight into the life-writing and perspective of working class servicemen and their mediations on war, with the news sheets containing large chunks of unedited text from the "Old Boys." The news sheets also provide a running commentary on their promotions, "leadership" qualities, and fighting abilities, with their achievements in the forces continually praised. Overall, the news sheets function to develop a strong masculine group identity which incorporates the older civilian male Barr Adams. The work of Lucinda Matthews-Jones demonstrates how the existence of philanthropic organizations in poor urban areas created a space for the formation of "cross-class friendships," which could be reinforced at a time of war.[162] In this case, the news sheets act as a conduit for the exchange of news as well

[159] Letter from Adams, September 1942, BA194209SEPTb, Shrewsbury House Archive (hereafter SHA).

[160] "I.G. Barr Adams (O.S)," (Liverpool, 2012), SHA.

[161] Thanks to Shrewsbury House and to the Archive Team for permission to cite from this material. I also acknowledge the work of the Archive Team in transcribing this material.

[162] Lucinda Matthews-Jones, "'I Still Remain One of the Old Settlement Boys': Cross-class Friendship in the First World War Letters of Cardiff University Settlement Lads' Club," *Cultural and Social History* 13, no. 2 (2016): 195-211, at 195.

as a safe forum for expressions of camaraderie and solicitude for each other. However, the correspondents, numbering around fifty servicemen in total, are also performing public roles – their awareness of a multiple audience potentially inhibits confidences, encourages jocularity and leads to a mutual reinforcement of viewpoints.[163]

The letters, which run to hundreds, covering the period 1940-46, are largely written by Adams either to multiple recipients or favoured respondents so there is often a tonal shift from the cheery light-heartedness of the news sheets to more intimate expressions of affection within the letters, often intensely expressed.[164] In his letters, Adams also passes on news of their families to his correspondents, acting as a point of reassurance at the time of the bombing raids in Liverpool. This dynamic supports the conclusions of Matthews-Jones, who argues that as philanthropic organisations in working class areas were "utilized by soldiers as part of their network of emotional support" they should be included "in our understanding of home and community" in wartime.[165] The closeness revealed within the correspondence reflects the strength of the volunteers' emotional attachment to the club in Portland Place, also evidenced by their decision to gather there when war was declared. On the day after Germany invaded Poland in September 1939, Adams records that although their football match is cancelled, the Old Boys still instinctively congregate at the club: "talking about the uncertain future…one of the soldiers crying openly that he was 'scared stiff'."[166] It is at the moment of volunteering, however, when this shared group identity acquires the patina of Welshness. Their communal act of enlistment, which mirrors the "smaller scale

[163] News Sheet 496, 1 July 1940, SHA.

[164] Letter from Adams to Reece [19] Aug. 1940, BA194008AUG19thBRb, SHA.

[165] Matthews-Jones, "'I Still Remain'," 197.

[166] Barr Adams, *The Club at War* (Liverpool, 2009), ch.2, SHA.

group volunteering" of the "Pals" battalions of the First World War when men joined up together in the expectation of fighting together,[167] is faithfully relayed in *The Club at War*:

> Bill Foulkes was standing at the corner of Dale Street and Castle Street opposite Liverpool Town Hall. It was a brilliantly fine Monday evening towards the end of May 1939…He was soon joined by one or two others, and they all crossed the street and walking in the direction of the Victoria Monument, turned into what had once been shop premises but was now serving as a recruiting centre for the newly "Liverpool Welsh" Tank Regiment. After waiting about two hours among many eager volunteers those who passed their medical test and were able by some means or other to prove their Welsh origins were duly sworn in. On the question of Welsh nationality it seems that an easy view was taken. Even Jimmy Mackay who sounded like a Scotchman, looked like an Englishman, and at times behaved very like an Irishman was able to satisfy the battalion adjutant about his Welsh ancestry. For the others it was comparatively easy. And so six who had gone in as civilians, came out as troopers.[168]

These Liverpudlian volunteers were able to confidently assert an ancestral Welshness in order to gain access to the martial masculinity of the glamorous new tank unit, drawing upon a recognisable strand of Welsh identity within their local community. A newspaper article appears to allude to one of the Shrewsbury volunteers when it observes, "two Liverpool-Welsh-Scotsmen, insisting respectively on the 'Mc' and 'Mac' have been enrolled. One proudly pointed to a Welsh grandmother as his qualification for admission. The other had a

[167] John Hartigan, "Volunteering in the First World War: The Birmingham Experience, August 1914-May 1915," *Midland History* 24, no. 1 (1999): 167-86, at 175-76.

[168] Adams, *Club at War*, ch.1, SHA. An additional five "Old Boys" subsequently joined.

Welsh mother."[169] Within the news sheets, these volunteers are initially referred to by their peers as "the Liverpool Welsh" "the 46th Welsh" or "the Taffies," [170] and there is clear willingness amongst the club's members to endorse the constructed Welshness of the 46th. As David McCrone and colleagues argue, a person's national identity is not only socially constructed but sensitive to external validation: "various 'identity claims' are made and received in various ways. Such claims and their reception may vary according to the context."[171] The identity claims of the Shrewsbury "Old Boys" were clearly accommodated within the 46th demonstrating that whilst these eleven volunteers did not constitute the original "sons of Wales" envisaged by the founders, Welshness retained an urban appeal beyond the confines of formalized diasporic institutions. At the same time, the familial connections of the "Old Boys" with Wales appears to have been rather distant. One of the group, Billy Reece alludes to this with his tongue-in-check reference: "They're holding a grand ball at St George's Hall on St David's Day so all we true blooded Welshmen feel that we are expected to attend," indicating that pride in regimental traditions of symbolic Welshness possibly overlaid any sense of national identification.[172] There is also little self-reference to questions of Welsh identity in the newsletters. It is likely that the volunteers essentially used the notion of ancestral Welshness to further consolidate their own shared sense of fraternity, forged in the Everton youth club and summer camps in Wales. For these

[169] "'Macs' Join". On the BBC People's War website, veteran Arthur Johnstone recollects, "I signed up with the Liverpool Welsh Territorials (46th RTR) declaring a Welsh grandmother." "My War Years and Being a POW." Article ID: A2146015. Contributed 17 December 2003.

[170] News Sheet 501, 7 July 1940, SHA.

[171] David McCrone, Robert Stewart, Richard Kiely and Frank Bechhofer, "Who Are We? Problematising National Identity," *Sociological Review* 46, no. 4 (1998): 629-52, at 651.

[172] News Sheet 419, 17 Feb. 1940, SHA. See also Johnes, "Welshness."

young working class men, the 46th provided a site of camaraderie and togetherness and, during the war, they made use of the regimental identity to further solidify their bonds of kinship. Five of them managed to reconstitute in Egypt, Adams noting, "The lads have stuck together marvellously so and if anything the first year of war that bound us all together more closely in many ways I think."[173]

In terms of the interaction between English and Welsh identities, one of the most fascinating aspects of the Shrewsbury House correspondence is when they – "the Taffies" – encounter Wales. The volunteers did have pre-existing knowledge of Wales, having attended an annual summer camp at Penmaenmawr in Conway. However, when the Liverpool Welsh tank regiment transfers from Blundellsands on the outskirts of Liverpool to a training camp at Dinas Dinlle in Caernarvonshire [Gwynedd] in June 1940, a sense of dissonance appears within their correspondence. One of the group writes back to Adams: "We have finally arrived and what a place!! Eight miles from the nearest town and to top it all the people here don't speak English. They just jabber away to you in Welsh. I think they must either be ignorant or they can't speak English."[174] A fellow "Old Boy" already posted out in Egypt, signals back empathetically from overseas, "Re. the opinion of [Atkinson] on Welsh people I can say the same for the wogs out here. They are too b----- lazy to learn the King's English."[175] Later on, new recruits to the regiment at Whitby are dismissed by another volunteer with the words, "These Welsh lads stink."[176] Very similar language is deployed

[173] Letter from Adams to Reece, 19 August 1940, BA194008AUG19thBRa, SHA.

[174] News Sheet 481, 6 June 1940, SHA.

[175] News Sheet 545, 8 September 1940, SHA. As I am focusing on a negative but slender aspect of an extensive six-year correspondence for the purpose of this article, I have assigned pseudonyms to some of the "Old Boys."

[176] Adams, *Club At War*, ch. 43, SHA.

within the volunteers' letters to describe colonial and Italian "others" encountered in North Africa: the "gyppos" and the "wogs" who also "stink" and are found "jabbering" away.[177] Paul Fussell refers to the use of stereotyping by Allied troops as mechanism through which to see themselves as "attractive, moral and exemplary"[178] and points out how, within military propaganda, "monosyllabic enemies" such as *kraut* or *wop* were "easier to despise than others."[179] However, whilst these exchanges may reflect commonplace forms of racialized military language, they also simultaneously construct the Welsh as form of domestic "other."[180] When Atkinson receives a posting to Criccieth, North Wales, this soon becomes the source of dissatisfaction, as retold within *The Club At War* in 1944, with an additional layer of anti-Welsh sentiment:

> His job was to act as a batman, and clerk to one of the officers. He was at least fortunate in his billet which was a hotel and he had no complaints to make on that score, either of the feeding or of lack of comfort. But he missed his old companions and commented unfavourably on the Welsh inhabitants, the fact that no training of any sort was being done and the dullness of life at a North Welsh coast resort in winter. The only compensations appear to have been the passing attraction of the Welsh girls and by way of a link with the famous, an occasional game of billiards

[177] News Sheet 429, 4 March 1940, SHA; News Sheet 485, 10 June 1940, SHA; Adams, *Club At War*, ch. 18, SHA. In his letters, J R Davies also makes reference to the Italian "Fascist" troops as "wogs". Letter, 22 March 1943, 13167, IWM.

[178] Paul Fussell, *Wartime. Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War* (Oxford, 1989), 127.

[179] Ibid., 117.

[180] See also Chris Hopkins, *English Fiction in the 1930s. Language, Genre, History* (London, 2006), 62.

> with Lloyd George's chauffeur – a certain Mr Dyer. He also saw the veteran statesman himself but reported that the local inhabitants held no high opinion of him judging him to be mean – a point on which the Welsh may at least claim to have gained expert knowledge through experience.[181]

These extracts suggest that the volunteers' construction of ancestral Welshness was contingent upon place and was open to challenge when they were actually based in Wales. There were other elements of discord captured in the archival material, hinting at the complexities underlining the creation of hybrid English Welsh units. Adams mentions that whilst the 46th Liverpool Welsh were training in Wales:

> the most local "local" had been put out of bounds following a series of disputes between the soldiers and the Welsh inhabitants. A climax was reached when the villagers declared that they would welcome the arrival of Hitler being apparently under the impression that he would liberate Wales and particularly their corner of it from the English occupation.[182]

Chris Williams alludes to the historical traditions within England of "certain pejorative attitudes towards the Welsh as a poor, ill-educated, coarse, shifty, garrulous and untrustworthy people."[183] Within the shared correspondence of the Shrewsbury House volunteers and Adams there was a tendency to indulge in the "othering" of Welsh civilians in

[181] Adams, *Club At War*, ch. 43, SHA.

[182] Ibid., ch. 29.

[183] Chris Williams, "Problematizing Wales," 5. See also Prys Morgan, "Early Victorian Wales and its Crisis of Identity," in *A Union of Multiple Identities. The British Isles, c.1750-c.*1850, ed. Laurence Brockliss and David Eastwood (Manchester, 1997), 93-109.

ways which mirror the crude national stereotyping of enemy troops. Thus, whilst participating in and subscribing to the invented military tradition of the Liverpool Welsh regiment, paradoxically the troopers often construct their identity in opposition to the Welsh, particularly when based in Wales. This supports Murray's contention that, in the case of migrants' descendants, "contrary ethnic positionings are often simultaneously maintained and claimed," an expression of what Brah terms "contingent positionality."[184] Yet, there could also be gentler associations. At the end of December 1940, Tommy Watts was on active service overseas, engaged, as a petrol lorry driver, in the fighting at Gallabat, on the Sudanese border with Ethiopia. Watts writes, recalling their annual camp: "At one time we were living in the mountains and it reminded me very much of North Wales and it was there that I saw the first and only rainfall since I have been in the Middle East."[185] Atkinson's letter cited above also contains the passage: "I had a fine run up by road and as we passed through Penmaenmawr it brought back many memories of the camps we have had there. I hope it won't be long before we are back there again."[186] Billy Reece, serving out in Egypt, uses Wales as a goal to return to at the war's end: "It's a far cry from Rhyl to Cairo and I didn't think last year my next Whit would be spent here. I guess Ali Baba Palin [Rhyl landlady] will feel the pinch. Well here's hoping we can pay a return visit next Whit"[187] whilst Jimmy Mackay, in Aldershot, reminisces about the "last time we went to Pen."[188] Here the English troopers collectively construct Wales as a restorative site of refuge and solace. Interestingly,

[184] Murray, "A Diasporic Vernacular?," 76; Brah, *Cartographies*, 149.

[185] Adams, *Club at War*, ch. 45, SHA. Watts was killed, aged twenty, in June 1941 and is commemorated on the Alamein Memorial, Egypt.

[186] News Sheet 481, 6 June 1940, SHA.

[187] News Sheet 470, 23 May 1940, SHA.

[188] News Sheet 530, 20 August 1940, SHA.

this nostalgic construction mirrors the contemporaneous work of the Welsh writer, Hilda Vaughan, who in two novels *The Soldier & the Gentlewoman* (1932) and *Pardon and Peace* (1945) addresses the experiences of English ex-servicemen seeking psychic recovery in post-war Wales. In *Pardon and Peace*, for example, an English soldier, Mark Osbourne, returns from fighting in the First World War to revisit a former Welsh holiday destination, in order "to be made whole again."[189]

The need to maintain the invented Welsh identity of the 46th remained strong to extremal observers and cheerleaders for the unit, not just the social and cultural representatives of the Liverpool Welsh diaspora, such as the department store, Owen Owen, which hosted a "comforts" club for the regiment,[190] but extending out to the press, which sustained the link through their reporting. For example, in June 1944, the Lord Mayor of Liverpool sent "hearty greetings" to the Liverpool Welsh based in Italy, congratulating them on a "splendid fighting record of which the City is proud."[191] Again, this reproduces a similar dynamic identified by McCartney in relation to the Liverpool Scottish battalion of the First World War where the presence of Englishmen in the ranks did not "dilute its character or alter its significance" but rather "helped to perpetuate this symbol of the Scottish community in Liverpool."[192] Although the number of original members with Liverpudlian or Welsh associations substantially diminished - a reflection of the Army's policy of cross-posting from 1941 onwards but also the loss of half of its tank crews during one of their first engagements on the Alamein line at Ruweisat Ridge in July 1942 - the local press continued

[189] Lucy Thomas, "Introduction," in Hilda Vaughan, *The Soldier and the Gentlewoman* (Dinas Powys, 2014), 1-19, at 7.

[190] "Liverpool Welsh Comforts Fund," *Daily Post,* 21 February 1941.

[191] "Britain Proud Of Its Fighting Regiments," *Union Jack,* 16 June 1944, 2.

[192] McCartney, *Citizen Soldiers*, 21.

to use the notion of a localized English Welsh identity to frame the tank regiment. Serving in North Africa, Italy, and Greece, the 46th was said to have maintained "a strong regimental spirit."[193] Coverage in the Liverpool press of the regiment's ceremonial dissolution in Greece in 1946, through the continued use of naming, underlines the connection in the sub-text of one photograph: "The General talks to Staff Sergeant Major J H Jones, who joined the regiment when it was formed in the summer of 1939. Next to him is another of the original members, Sjt. F W Jones." The *Echo* journalist, Ronald Clare, who first encountered the 46th in Italy, chose this occasion to reiterate how in 1939 "the sons of Wales in Liverpool" answered the call to form their own battalion and, with the Eighth Army at El Alamein, "these Liverpool Welshmen fought fearlessly" and with "native tenacity."[194] He projects forward to the time when these men "next meet in Liverpool, and sing, as only the Welsh can sing, "Land of My Fathers."[195] This blurring of identity is clearly considered unproblematic: even amongst those who know this unit is no longer filled with men from Liverpool, its "localised" Welshness still matters.[196]

CONCLUSION

By examining the functioning of English Welsh dual identifications within localized hybrid military formations during the Second World War, this article complicates our understanding of the lived identity of Britishness in wartime and highlights the complex, multi-layered nature of personal identity construction within the modern British world. In the first half of the twentieth century there existed hundreds of English men and women for whom Wales and

[193] RH87, 46 RTR 7431, TMA.

[194] Clare, "L'pool Welsh Disband," 1.

[195] Ibid., 1.

[196] Scully, "Discourses of Authenticity," 234.

Welshness held *meaning* and whose lived subjectivities reflected a delicate balancing act between an imagined "home" of origin and their "home" of birthplace and residence. An examination of these military units provides one way of demonstrating how these complementary identifications across Englishness and Welshness acted as an important strand of pluralistic Britishness in wartime. Whilst both regiments emerged as the result of a deliberate assertion of elite diasporic Welshness, their identities were constantly renegotiated and, on occasion, could be significantly subverted. J R Davies's wartime self-construction made use of his hybridity, rooted in paternal Welshness, to signal an attachment to family and a shared imagined "home" whilst the Shrewsbury House "Old Boys" made use of a more vestigial ancestral Welshness to consolidate kinship bonds forged in their youth club "home." This suggests that national identities and identifications are not just about nation(s) but are also about understandings of home, friendship groups, and kinship affiliations. For all these servicemen, the part "played by England" in their making was crucial.[197] As English-born men they tended to construct Wales as the "other," in both positive and negative ways, underlining duality as a site of complex "identifications and positionings."[198] Overall, this article points to the presence of fluid and diverse English Welsh identities that co-existed within constructions of Britishness in the first half of the twentieth century and which could be mobilized at times of war.

Examining decorative culture within the Palace of Westminster, James Ford suggests that, at times throughout the nineteenth century, Welsh national identity could "combine or collide with Englishness to form an overriding Britishness."[199] This article also points to the

[197] Jeremy Hooker, *John Cowper Powys and David Jones: a Comparative Study* (London, 1979), 30.

[198] Hickman et al., "Limitations," 178.

[199] Ford, "Art of Union," 14.

"conglomerative" role of "British" as a category of historical identity.[200] During the Second World War, the 99th London Welsh and the 46th Liverpool Welsh units provided a useful vehicle for English men to access martial masculinity by claiming identification with Wales but they also valued their wider participation in the British war effort, particularly as part of the iconic Eighth Army. In this sense, it is possible that their military experiences within localized hybrid units also shaped, and contributed to, their sense of Britishness. By highlighting the interconnectedness between constituent nations of Britain, in this case Wales and England, and the complexities of identity formation *within* Britishness, this article adds to the literature which complicates the notion of fixed singular national identities and underscores the importance of dual identifications within and across the borders of the constituent nations in advancing our understanding of twentieth-century Britain.

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[200] Hickman et al., "Limitations," 178.